The JWG provides a framework for strengthening cooperation to combat terrorism including, *inter-alia,* by way of exchange of information and assessments on terrorism, cooperation in preventing terrorist financing, drug trafficking and organised crime as also through capacity building.

Discussion with Pak Prime Minister Regarding Indian PoWs

1503. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government discussed with Pak Prime Minister on his recent visit to India on Indian Prisoners of War captured by Pakistan in 1971-72 Indo-Pak war, for their release; and

(b) if so, the response of the Pakistan Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Government have been consistently taking up with Pakistan the issue of early release and repatriation of the 54 Indian Prisoners of War (PoWs) that are believed to be in Pakistan's custody since 1971-72. The matter was also taken up during the meeting between Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and the Prime Minister of Pakistan on November 24, 2004 in New Delhi.

(b) Pakistan has not acknowledged the presence of these Indian PoWs in its custody.

Indian Criminals Hiding in Pakistan

1504. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many persons wanted for trial in India for various crimes committed in this country are hiding in Pakistan;

(b) if so, whether a list of such persons was handed over to Foreign Minister of Pakistan during his visit to India in September, 2004;

(c) if so, the response of Foreign Minister of the Pakistan; and

(d) whether these persons likely to be extradited to India in near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) Government have, from time to time, handed over to Pakistan list of fugitives from Indian law, known to be residing in Pakistan with the request that they be apprehended and handed over to India. A consolidated list, along with a similar request, was again handed over to Pakistan during the Home Secretary level talks on the subject of "Terrorism and Drug Trafficking" held in Islamabad on August 10-11, 2004 as part of the Composite Dialogue. Besides, during the meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries on September 4, 2004 in New Delhi, preparatory to the meeting of the Foreign Ministers on September 5-6, 2004, India's proposal for an extradition treaty was reiterated.

Pakistan has, so far, not responded positively to these requests and to the proposal for an extradition treaty.

Indo-us Joint Working Group on Terrorism

1505. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether a joint Indo-US working group on counter-terrorism has been operational in India since January 2000, and there were certain unfortunate experiences with US intelligence agencies;

(b) if so, whether this working group is still operational and what positive benefits/useful inputs we have had, which strengthened our national security set-up; and

(c) whether Government propose such joint working groups with other countries also in combating menace of terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. An India-US Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter-Terrorism was set up in January 2000 and has, since, met six times. Ambassador Cofer Black, US State Department's Senior Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism last visted India on March 1-2, 2004 when he held detailed discussions with his counterpart in the Ministry of External Affairs and other officials. The JWG provide a framework for strengthening cooperation to combat terrorism including through exchanges of information and assessments on terrorism, training and curbing of drug trafficking.